Hellenistic Time Lord Procedures:
Circumambulations through the Bounds
by Demetra George

Hellenistic astrology is the direct ancestor of modern Western astrology. It was developed and practiced between about 150 BCE and 600 CE in the ancient Mediterranean basin. While the majority of the hundreds of texts written were in the Greek language (the lingua franca of the day), the authors came from many different countries including Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Rome. These Hellenistic astrologers employed a vastly wider array of timing techniques than are used or even known to modern astrology. Many of these timing methods have been lost due to omissions or misunderstandings in the translation and transmission of this material during the last two thousand years. However, due to the efforts of Robert Schmidt of Project Hindsight and others over the past fifteen years, the origins of Western horoscopic astrology are being rediscovered and reconstructed. (1)

One of the fundamental concepts common to the many Hellenistic timing techniques is that of "time lord." The Greek word is *chronocrator*, and this literally means a "ruler of time." When a planet becomes a time lord in an individual's chart, it becomes activated and that planet then rules over the affairs of the person's life for a given period of time. Whatever events that planet signifies in the natal chart are likely to occur when it is the time lord; and according to its placement, condition and configurations with other planets, those events will be more or less dramatic and more or less beneficial to the life.

Some of the most important time lord procedures in Hellenistic Astrology have unfamiliar names such as Circumambulations through the Bounds, Zodiacal Releasing from the Lots of Fortune and Spirit, Quarters of the Moon, and Decennials. Each of these methods examines the life from various perspectives and inquiries, whereby the life is divided into a sequence of periods that are each governed by a particular time lord planet. It is this succession of time lords and their sub-time lords that establish the sequence of the general fortunate and unfortunate periods of a person's life. In Vedic astrology, *dashas* are conceptually analogous to the Hellenistic time lords, but the methods for determining them differ substantially.

Circumambulations through the Bounds was a timing procedure employed by many of the major Hellenistic astrologers such as Dorotheus of Sidon, Claudius Ptolemy, Paulus Alexandrinus, Hephaistio of Thebes, Rhetorius of Egypt, and elaborated upon by the Arabic Abu Ma'Shar (2). In the early seventh century, Rhetorius laid out an account of how and when to utilize the multiplicity of timing techniques, and he told the reader, "Before all, investigate circumambulations."(3) He and others implied that circumambulations designated the broadest indications of good and bad times, and that the individual events specified by all the other timing methods should be evaluated and subject to the indications of the time lords established by circumambulations.

The Procedure

Circumambulation literally means “to walk around.” The Greek word for bound is *horion*, which translates as boundary, limit, or territory. Bounds, referred to in medieval astrology as “terms,” are the unequal subdivisions of each zodiacal sign, whereby each portion is ruled by one of the five planets, excluding the Sun and Moon. The rulers of the bounds are called the bound lords, who by their nature have jurisdiction over that portion of the sign and establish the leniencies or strictures that are permitted within that sector. (4)

In this procedure, a qualified planet or point which we shall henceforth call the predominator, begins to circumambulate from its natal position, walking around the chart degree by degree through the zodiacal signs at some fixed rate. As the predominator passes through the successive bounds, the bound lords, each in turn, become the primary time lords for a certain interval of time. As the predominator encounters other planets, either bodily (by conjunction) or by ray (aspect), these planets become the participating time lords. (5). The duration of each bound lord as the ruler of a certain period of life is determined by converting the interval degrees of the bounds to the ascensional times of that sign. (6) Let us explain the procedure in more detail, and then illustrate the method through an examination the chart of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

The first step is to determine the planet or point that is most qualified to be released as the predominator, and via its movement it has the responsibility of determining each of the primary and participating time lords. It must meet certain qualifications in order to have the power and authority needed for this task. There are four possible candidates – the Sun, the Moon, the Lot of Fortune or the Pre-natal Lunation (PNL), and if none of these candidates meet the necessary criteria, there is a default to the Ascendant. Ancient astrologers called these points “the places of life.” (7) The Sun and Moon are the luminaries, the lights and leaders of the diurnal and nocturnal sects; they signify the soul and the body, the God and Goddess, the king and queen, respectively. The Lot (Part) of Fortune is a mathematical construct of the Sun, Moon, and Ascendant degree which is called the *horoskopos* and represents the moment of birth and the emergence of life. The Pre-natal Lunation (PNL) is the degree of the New or Full moon prior to birth, and represents the syzergy of the body and soul.

In order to be acceptable, candidates are examined in the order of first the sect light (8), then the non-sect light, followed by Fortune and PNL, to see if they occupy either the first, tenth, or eleventh houses, which were said to be the advantageous places. If none of them do, there is default to the degree of the Ascendant. Secondly the candidate must be configured to one of its four rulers (bound, domicile, exaltation, or trigon in this order) by whole sign, using only the aspects of conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition.

If a candidate meets both criteria of occupying an advantageous place and being configured to one of its rulers, the final consideration is to see if it is afflicted by a malefic planet (conjunct, square or opposed by Mars or Saturn by whole sign aspect). If so, preference should be given to another acceptable candidate that is free of connection to a malefic. If all acceptable candidates are adversely configured to a malefic, then the best of the lot must be chosen and accepted for what it is. (9) It may be that an individual

does not have any planet or point that qualifies to be the predominator, and the texts do not say what to do in such a case.

Let us now turn to chart of JKO to determine the planet or point most qualified to be released as the predominator, and establish the sequence of primary and participating time lords by looking to the movement of the predominator through the bounds and to its configurations to other planets. The printout from Delphic Oracle software will indicate the beginning and duration of the periods of both the primary and participating time lords. The defaults are the whole sign house system, the seven classical planets, and whole sign Ptolemiac aspects (conjunction, sextile, square, trine, opposition). In JKO's chart, the Sun is the first candidate to qualify as predominator, because as sect leader it occupies the advantageous tenth house, is configured to itself as domicile lord of Leo (10), and is not afflicted by either of the malefics, Mars or Saturn. (11) Now we are ready to begin circumambulating the Sun.

Since the Sun's natal location places it in the bounds of Jupiter, the first primary time lord is Jupiter. As the Sun moves from 5 Leo10 to 6 Leo 01 (12), it enters into the bounds of Venus which becomes the next primary time lord. As the Sun continues to circumambulate through the sign of Leo, degree by degree, it passes through the bounds Saturn, of Mercury, and Mars. Then as it continues through Virgo, the bound lords as primary time lords in succession are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn. This then is the order of planetary time lords that govern the broadest division of the times of JKO's life, and the general nature of the events that occur, both in terms of the significations themselves and their overall fortunate or unfortunate quality.

The participating time lords are determined by the aspects made by the Sun to the other planets as it circumambulates. The first aspect the circumambulating Sun makes is to itself, and so the Sun is the first participating time lord, cooperating with Jupiter which is the primary time lord. Thus JKO was born under a Jupiter/Sun period. The Sun remains the participating time lord until it reaches the 9th degree of Leo where it encounters a sextile ray from Jupiter at 9 Gemini. Jupiter becomes the next participating time lord until the Sun reaches 21 Gemini where it encounters a sextile ray from Venus, and Venus takes over. The next ray the Sun encounters is a trine from Saturn at 24 Sagittarius, then a trine from the Moon at 25 Aries; then once the Sun enters Virgo, a square from Jupiter at 9 Gemini followed by a conjunction with Mars at 14Virgo, a square from Venus at 21 Gemini, and square with Saturn at 25 Sagittarius. This is the order of the participating time lords, and a planet remains as participating time lord until the predominator encounters the ray of another planet, even if the primary time lord has changed.

Combining the primary and participating time lord sequences, and referring to the Delphic Oracle printout for the dates, we have the following divisions of time:

Jupiter (primary time lord) 7/28/29
    Sun (participating time lord) – 7/28/29
Venus 8/23/30
    Sun continues

Jupiter – 3/14/35
Saturn 1/9/37
Jupiter continues
Mercury 12/28/45
Jupiter continues
Venus – 10/28/50
Mars 9/5/53
Venus continues
Saturn – 7/8/54
Moon – 9/25/55
Mercury 5/9/61
Moon continues
Venus 4/11/70
Moon continues
Jupiter 7/18/73
Mars 3/19/80
Jupiter 12/18/82
Mars continues
Mars 1/9/88
Mars continues
Venus 12/29/88
Saturn 8/20/92

Guidelines For Interpretation

Let us begin with definitions of what we mean by good/fortunate/beneficial and bad/unfortunate/ detrimental. Good is the conditions that result in vital health and long life, prosperity, happiness, and success in ones endeavors. Bad is the conditions that result in poor health and short life, poverty, suffering, and failure in ones endeavors. While it is true that seeming misfortune sometimes turns out for the best, what we are evaluating is the *final outcomes* of the events. And given the choice, it is unlikely that most people would voluntarily choose illness, poverty, suffering and failure as their lot in life. In traditional astrology, the benefic planets which were said do good are Venus and Jupiter, and the malefic planets, Mars and Saturn were said to do bad. (12)

According to Abu Ma'shar, there are several essential factors to consider in the interpretation of this technique.(13) The first factor is the intrinsic benefic or malefic nature of the primary time lord and its condition in the natal chart. A potentially benefic time period in the life cannot be any more benefic than the condition of that planet in the natal chart. The second factor is the benefic or malefic nature of the primary time lord in combination with the benefic or malefic nature of the participating time lord. And the final factor is the changeover of the predominator moving from the bounds of a benefic time lord to a malefic time lord or vice versa.

When both primary and participating time lords are benefics in good condition in the natal chart, the period will be fortunate and famous for good things. When both primary and participating time lords are malefics in bad condition in the natal chart, the period

will be marked by great crises, bodily, sickness, and obstacles. When the primary time lord is a benefic, but the participating time lord is malefic, there will be a mixture of events and a moderate measure of good and bad things, both of joys and sorrows, of sickness and health. When the primary time lord is a malefic, but the participating time lord is a benefic, the malefic will subject the person to critical times and the good things that accrue to him will be mixed with bad, but the benefic will rescue the person from total disaster.

When the predominator moves from the bounds of one benefic time lord to another benefic time lord, or when a benefic participating time lord hands over to another benefic participating time lord, this indicates the continuation of good fortune. The changeover from a malefic to a benefic indicates a change from bad fortune and debasement to elevation. The changeover from a benefic to a malefic indicates a transition from good things to bad things and to the fear of death. The changeover from a malefic to another malefic indicates that at that time the person is enveloped in misfortune, and moves into worsening conditions and to the fear of death.

Analysis of JKO

Jupiter: Age birth to 13 months – Jupiter is the primary time lord and the powerful natal Sun is the participating time lord in the bounds of a benefic. This is generally a very fortunate time period as Jackie is born into a family of great wealth, status, and affluence.

Venus: Age 13 months to 7 ½ - Benefic Jupiter hands over the times to Venus, also a benefic, and so there is a continuation of the good fortune. Just after another benefic Jupiter becomes the participating time lord, a sister is born to Jackie. However, note that since Jupiter and Venus, both in the 8th house of inherited wealth, are problematical in the natal chart (Jupiter in detriment, and both opposed by Saturn and squared by Mars) (14), the good fortune is not all that it could be. During this time period, the effects of the 1929 Stock Market crash begin to affect the family fortunes and her father's in particular who squanders his assets.

Saturn: Age 7 ½ to16 ½ – Malefic Saturn takes over as primary time lord from benefic Venus, and thus we can expect a change from good things to worsening conditions. Benefic Jupiter continues as cooperating time lord, a condition which will rescue the person and good will be mixed with bad. Note that Saturn is retrograde, afflicted by square from Mars, occupies the second house of money and rules the fourth house of parents and home. With the onset of this period, Jackie's parents separated and then divorced, rupturing her home life. She lived with the stigma and taint of divorce in a 1930's Catholic family. At the age of 12 her mother remarried an extremely wealthy and socially prominent man, thus rescuing Jackie from the fear of poverty and social ostracism.

Mercury: Age 16 ½ to 24 – Malefic Saturn hands over the times to Mercury, who although combust, is in the tenth house with Fortune and doubly bonified by sextiles from Venus and Jupiter. Mercury is the significator of learning, literary arts, and travel, who rules along with Jupiter as participating lord. Thus we might expect a change from

somewhat difficult times to much better times. During this period, she graduates, travels to England where she meets Winston Churchill, enrolls in Vassar, is dubbed Queen Debutante, studies in France for a year where she is launched into a social scene with aristocrats and celebrities. When Venus becomes the participating lord at the age of 21, she wins the Vogue literary prize; graduates from GWU with a degree in French literature; gets a job as a camera girl with the Washington Times Herald. This period ends an engagement to JFK. Note that Mercury in Leo is the domicile lord of Venus, her seventh house marriage lord, and a royal husband is presented to her.

Mars: Age 24 to 31 ¾ – Benefic Mercury hands over the primary time lordship to malefic Mars which bodes ill; and Venus continues as participating time lord for about a year during which she is married, loses her first child by miscarriage, and becomes aware of her husband's infidelities. Thus there is a mix of good and bad, with the bad prevailing and a marriage that takes place under the auspices of Mars. At the age of 25, Venus hands over to Saturn as participating time lord for the next year, and we can assume that the bad intensifies with both malefics ruling. She nurses JFK through two spinal surgeries, and at the end of this period there are public rumors of marital troubles; she goes to England to get away from the humiliation. At the age of 26, Mars hands over the participating time lordship to the Moon, which in the natal chart is bonified, though weak in a cadent house of accidents and injuries, and so there will be some good mixed with the bad. This period saw her first meeting with Aristotle Onassis, a reconciliation with her husband insisted upon by her father-in law, a stillborn daughter, the death of her own father, the live birth of her daughter Caroline, her elevation to the position of First Lady, and the birth of her second live child, John.

Mercury: Age 31½ to 40 ¾ – Malefic Mars now hands over to benefic Mercury, and during this period of Mercury's time lordship, Mercury as bound lord is quite powerful in the first degrees of Virgo as it is in its own domicile and exaltation, and the benefic but weak Moon continues as participating time lord. Thus we may expect a change from difficult times to more fortunate times. Mercury, as domicile lord of Venus, has now delivered its goods, and Jackie reigns as First Lady. In looking at Jackie's life, the experiences seem to be mixed. Emulating the mercurial archetype, she brought an unprecedented standard of culture and arts to the White House administration amidst much criticism for her excessive expenditures. She lost another child who was born prematurely, her husband was assassinated, she went through financial anxiety, grief, and depression, emerged into a jet set social whirl and romantic liaisons, began the funding of the Kennedy Library and the restoration of the Metropolitan Opera House, and this period ended with another royal marriage to shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis.

Venus: Age 40 ¾ to 53 ½ - Benefic Mercury hands over to benefic Venus, and the Moon continues as participating time lord. With Venus/Moon, we might expect a continuation of good fortune with the awareness of the problematical natal conditions of Venus. All the themes from Jackie's first marriage resurface, only they are bigger this time. She experiences marital infidelity from her husband, and she retaliates by spending ever-increasing amounts of his money. Ari campaigns to divorce her and deprive her of inheritance rights. Three years into this period Jupiter takes over from the Moon as

participating time lord. Ari dies before he can divorce her, and under a Venus/Jupiter period she becomes an extremely wealthy widow and buys an estate on Martha's Vineyard asserting her independence from the Kennedy clan. This period ends with Mars taking over as participating time lord and she is promoted to full editor at Doubleday Publishing House. Mars in the natal chart is the domicile lord of the Ascendant, and as a universal technique this indicates the potential for personal success when activated as time lord.

Jupiter: Age 53 ½ to 58 ½ – Benefic Jupiter takes over the primary time lordship from benefic Venus, and Mars continues as participating lord until the closure of this period. We might expect the continuation of good fortune with some bad mixed in. This period begins with the public declaration of her romance with diamond financier Maurice Templeton, her mother's diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, and Jackie's fear for her own health. She continues her professional life in publishing, with the coup of the Michael Jackson memoirs; sees her daughter married and devotes herself to her grandchildren.

Mars: Age 58 ½ to death at 64 – Malefic Mars is now the primary time lord, and we would expect this final period of her life to be very difficult, with a malefic primary time lord and two malefic participating time lords. Under Mars/Mars, she buries her mother, and rages over JFK Jr.'s romance with Madonna whom Jackie sees as emulating Marilyn Monroe's affair with JKF. This period is followed by Venus as participating time lord, which holds back the tide of bad fortune. Jackie has a fascination with Buddhism, Eastern Mysticism, and alternative medicine, and she facilitates the publication of Bill Moyer's book on Healing and the Mind. At the age of 63 Venus hands over to Saturn as participating time lord. Under the Mars/Saturn period, Jackie has a riding accident at 64 years of age, and the subsequent public announcement of her illness – non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Jackie dies on May 19, 1994.

In surveying the sequence of benefic and malefic time lords established by circumambulations through the bounds, we see that until the final years of Jackie's life, there were only two periods governed by malefics – Saturn between the ages of 7 ½ - 16 ½ and Mars between the ages of 24-31 ½. But in both of these periods there were benefic participating time lords operative, which Abu Ma'shar says rescue the natives from the dangers brought on by the malefics. Most of her life was under the governance of benefics. The only times of a malefic/malefic combination was the year following her marriage to JFK when she realized the reality of her marriage. There is some evidence that she contracted syphilis from her husband at this time that contributed to her ongoing difficulties with pregnancies. As noted above, her illness and death followed the second malefic/malefic combination of primary and participating time lords.

Diagrams Supplied
Bound Table
JKO chart
(?Template)
Manwaring printout

Hindsight website
Manwaring website

Endnotes

1. For more information on resources for the study of Hellenistic astrology, see www.projecthindsight.com
2. Dorotheus of Sidon (*Pentateuch* III.2), Claudius Ptolemy (*Tetrabiblos*, IV. 10), Paulus Alexandrinus (*Introductory Matters*, 34), Hephasitio of Thebes (*Apotelesmatics*, II. 26), Rhetorius of Egypt (*CCAG*; VII.1. p 241-2), and Abu Ma'Shar (*On Solar Revolutions* II. 3).
3. Rhetorius, CCAG; VII.1 p. 241.
4. There are several variations of bound systems – the Egyptian, Chaldean, Ptolemaic, the one included by Vettius Valens. This paper will follow the Egyptian bounds, the system most used by Hellenistic astrologers.
5. Various authors differed on the some of the specific details of this technique. This paper will follow the guidelines given by Dorotheus, explicated by Hephaistio, and elaborated upon by Abu Ma'shar; note that Ptolemy and Paulus considered other factors.
6. The ascensional times of the signs are the time it takes for a certain portion of the ecliptic to fully ascend over the eastern horizon at various latitudes. A Table of the Ascensional Arcs of Zodiacal Signs can be found at www.projecthindsight.com . In addition, Delphic Oracle software can generate these calculations for a specific chart. See www.**zodiac**-x-**files**.com
7. Dorotheus of Sidon (*Pentateuch* III.2).
8. A diurnal chart has the Sun above the horizon, and the Sun is the sect light. A nocturnal chart has the Sun beneath the horizon, the the Mon is the sect light.
9. Dorotheus states that if a malefic is casting its rays to the degree of the predominator, it will harm the native when this malefic becomes the time lord (*Pentateuch* III.2).
10. JKO has a diurnal chart because the Sun is above the horizon, thus making the Sun her sect leader. The Sun occupies the 10th house, one of the three advantageous places, and thus is a potential candidate. Now looking to see if the Sun is configured to any of its four rulers, let us begin with the bound lord. The Sun at 5 Leo 10 is in the bounds of Jupiter, as Jupiter is the bound lord of the first six degrees of Leo. In the natal chart, Jupiter is at 9 Gemini. Hephaistio tells us that the bound lord must see its own bounds (II.78), meaning that Jupiter would have to be between the first and sixth degrees of Gemini in order to see its own bounds at 1- 6 Leo. Since it is at 9 Gemini, it does not meet this criterium, so must we discard it. The next ruler is the domicile lord of the Sun, which since the Sun is in Leo, the Sun is its own domicile lord and is configured to itself. Thus, we now have an acceptable candidate. The last thing we want to do is to check whether either Mars or Saturn is configuring the Sun by whole sign aspect—conjunction, square or opposition. Since Saturn in Sagittarius is trine by sign and Mars in Virgo is in aversion (semi-sextile), neither of the malefic planets is

connected to the Sun. We can be assured that we have a strong candidate, in it's own domicile and not afflicted by the malefics.

11. Because the Greeks did have the zero in their numeric system, the first degree of a sign begins at 0 degrees 0 minutes and ends at 1 degree 0 minutes. Thus, in this example, when the predominator moves to 6 degrees Leo 01 minutes, it has entered the seventh degree of the sign.
12. In some systems the Sun and Moon are also considered benefics, depending upon how they are situated in the chart. Mercury is called common, meaning that this planet can go either way, as a benefic or malefic based upon with which planets it is most closely associated.
13. Abu Mashar, (*On Solar Revolutions* II. 3).
14. A Hellenistic astrologer might evaluate Venus thus: Venus as ruler of the seventh house of marriage and the twelfth house of afflictions does not belong to the sect in favor, is unhappy as a morning rising star and in a diurnal sign, does not occupy any of the positions of her own rulerships, is located in the moderate strength but bad nature eighth house of death, and is afflicted by both malefics, Mars and Saturn. So while Venus is a benefic by intrinsic nature, her condition in this chart does not support the full expression of her benefic nature and points to unhappiness in the areas and topics she signifies.